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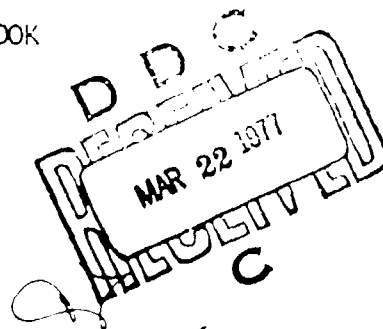
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21 NOVEMBER 1976

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN AVAILABLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

BY

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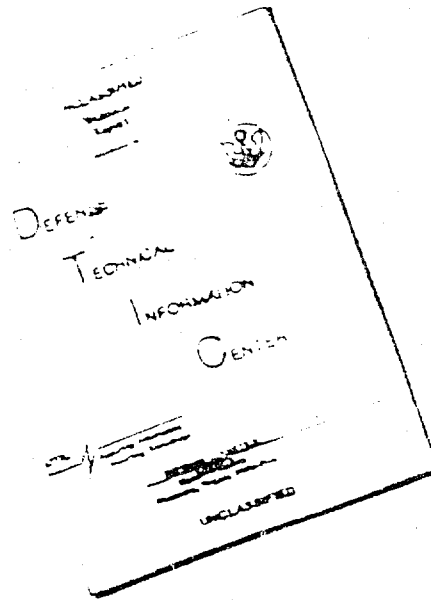
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greatly facilitates the identification of organizational problems and the subsequent action planning to intervene in resolving problems. The major conclusions of the study are:

(1) Organizational development has evolved from society's progressively increasing concern for the welfare of the worker as well as from industry's continual efforts to improve worker productivity.

(2) Organizational development is beneficial for some organizations under certain conditions; it does have application within the Department of Defense (DOD), both at the troop unit level and within a Headquarters. Organizational development also has limitations and thus should remain as an available management strategy for the leader to consider.

(3) To enhance the probability of success in applying the organizational development concept, the use of trained facilitators is essential. Success will also be determined by the degree of consistency between the top management philosophy and the underlying theory that supports the organizational development concept.

Research, lectures, interviews, and personal participation in organizational development efforts were utilized in the preparation of this paper.

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by

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## ABSTRACT

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## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN AVAILABLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The term "organizational development" first emerged in managerial writings less than two decades ago. It has since been used widely, and often loosely, in both the literature of management as well as by different individuals who describe its application. While the term remains anything but precise, most definitions currently in use agree in substance that organizational development--OD, for short--is "a planned, managed, systematic process to change the culture, systems, and behavior of an organization, in order to improve the organization's effectiveness in solving its problems and achieving its objectives."<sup>1</sup> Presumably because OD connotes a wide variety of approaches and functions with a basic strategy aim of organizational improvement, the Army has adopted usage of the term "Organizational Effectiveness" or OE.<sup>2</sup>

### THE OD CONCEPT

Peter Drucker has indicated that making effective decisions is one of the most important concerns of top management.<sup>3</sup> The decision itself and certainly the decision making process utilized, will be a reflection of the management philosophy which prevails in the



organization. In order for the manager to understand the OD concept and to evaluate it as a possible management strategy to adopt, it is necessary to review briefly the assumptions supporting management theories. McGregor describes "Theory X" as the traditional view of direction and control wherein authority is the central indispensable means of managerial control.<sup>4</sup> Most of the other principles of organization, such as unity of command, staff and line, span of control, etc., are directly derived from this authoritarian model. In the military environment, these principles have not only been the basis for its organization, but authority is enforceable through a wide range of available administrative, non judicial, as well as courts-martial processes. At the core of any theory concerning the management of human resources are assumptions about human behavior and motivation. Under Theory X, the implicit assumptions about human behavior may be summarized as follows: (1) because the average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment in order to achieve organizational objectives, and (2) the average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has little ambitions, and wants security above all.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the most troublesome problems in managing human resources have been directly traceable to over reliance on authority. Consequently, the human relations movement started some forty years ago as an inquiry into how people in organizations do behave, not should behave. The classical Hawthorne studies reported by Roethlisberger and Dickson in Management and the Worker (1936) revealed a very complicated and different phenomenon existed in the industrial setting, calling for a new conception of collaboration and leadership. In short, the view emerged that the social structure of any particular company determines the attitudes, feelings, and sentiments concerning duties and obligations, all of which affect the kind of collaboration and communication expected of management as well as the kind of behavior that can be expected from others.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent behavioral science research led to the formulation of vastly different management assumptions than those reflected under Theory X. In summary, McGregor's "Theory Y" assumptions view individuals: (1) as having initiative to work, (2) as having the ability to make and carry out decisions in work, (3) as learning not only to accept but to seek responsibility, (4) as exercising self-direction and

self-control in the service of objectives to which committed, and (5) as deriving satisfaction of ego from the achievement of the commitment to organizational objectives.<sup>7</sup>

While Theory X assumptions are deeply engrained based on widely prevalent and successful use of the authoritarian model over time, sociological changes have and are occurring which challenge both their validity and usefulness. Many managers recognize that if the assumptions supporting Theory Y are valid, opportunities exist to create conditions that would enable improved effectiveness to be attained through tapping the unrealized potential of human resources. Thus the OD concept evolved based largely on the assumptions supporting the Theory Y management philosophy. The prevailing emphasis of OD is not so much on what is done, but how it is done and the underlying rationale for doing it that way. While OD does not deny that authority is an appropriate means for control under certain conditions, the main thrust of the OD effort is to create an environment which will encourage commitment to organization objectives by providing opportunities for the exercise of involvement, initiative, and ingenuity in achieving them. In applying this concept, the management strategy

recognizes that both individual motivation and the informal social relationships that develop within an organization modify the formal structure and influence organizational effectiveness.<sup>8</sup>

In evaluating the relationship between individual motivation and work, there appears to be general agreement among behavioral scientists which relates in one form or another to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs concept. According to Maslow, we are all motivated by a number of basic needs, which can roughly be categorized into physiological needs, security needs, social needs, ego needs, and self-actualization needs. The hierarchy means that the needs on lower levels are active motivators only until they are reasonably satisfied; then the next higher level need takes over. While a satisfied need is not an active motivator any longer, man is a wanting animal and there will always be a higher need to take its place.<sup>9</sup> An interesting phenomenon emerges when applying the converse situation to this view. Namely, when man's needs are thwarted, he behaves in ways which tend to defeat organizational objectives: he becomes resistant, antagonistic, uncooperative. According to McGregor, such behavior is a consequence, not a cause.<sup>10</sup>

Now that the framework or theory from which OD evolved has been established, further comment can be made concerning the definition of OD. A common thread binding all definitions of OD emphasizes that it is a planned process to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the organization. French and Bell stress that OD is "a long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture."<sup>11</sup> Every organization has its own unique culture, which provides an indicator of the climate or health of the organization. The term "culture" used in this sense, refers to "prevailing patterns of activities, interactions, norms, sentiments, (including feelings), attitudes, values, and products."<sup>12</sup> To change the culture means to change the system of beliefs and values of the organization, and to integrate individual goals with organizational objectives. Traditionally, the cultural element of an organization's entity is not fully recognized or examined, as it is the hidden or suppressed domain of the informal system which is, none the less, omnipresent. Therefore, the work situation must also be viewed as a social system in order for the manager to be perceptive in recognizing and satisfying man's social

needs in ways which tend to reinforce organizational objectives. By "system" is meant something which must be considered as a whole because each part bears a relationship of interdependence to every other part.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE OD PROCESS

This section will describe the OD process and a few of the techniques whose objectives are to make progress in applying the OD concept and theory to practice. As previously indicated, OD evolved as a result of change in views gained from studies and research in the behavior sciences. The OD concept recognizes that change is continuous, and that management's biggest challenge is the successful introduction of needed change into the organization. Thus, paramount recognition is given to the idea that an organization is not a static entity, and if it is to survive and prosper with efficiency, it must cope with even dramatic changes impacting from both the external environment and within its formal and informal structures.

The OD process is in many respects not unlike the "Estimate of the Situation" so familiar to military leaders. The OD emphasis is on goal setting (define the objective) and the gathering of information concerning

the available resources and existing relationships (facts bearing on the situation) in order to determine the needed intervention (selected course of action) to insure organization effectiveness in completing the tasks (mission accomplishment). Thus, goal setting is not only linked with the problem-solving process, but the success of any developmental effort of an organization may be gauged from the emphasis given to the quantity and quality of the goals it sets. More important, however, is that the degree of effectiveness in achievement of the goals depends, to a large extent, upon the degree of commitment to the goals by the people in the organization who must achieve them. One of the most pronounced values of OD is recognition that people are more committed to achieving goals if they had a voice in establishing them. Participation (involvement of people) becomes a key consideration.

Another element of the OD process which precedes, happens concurrently with and subsequently to the introduction of OD intervention techniques, is the need to make a thorough and continuous diagnosis of the organization. The primary purpose of the diagnosis is to identify and treat the cause (the existing issues and problems), not the symptoms that often mask the real issues.

This assessment is particularly critical so as to minimize the probability of introducing unneeded change, which can be severely disruptive and counter-productive. With respect to collecting data, a number of techniques are available and include interview, use of questionnaires, and direct observation in work situations, to include staff meetings and other group sensing (problem identification-solving) sessions. The methods chosen, as well as how and who conducts the diagnosis, depend upon the prevailing circumstances: the time and resources available, the skill level of supervisors, and the needs of the organization.

At this stage in examining the OD process, a number of unresolved questions and issues start to emerge. For instance, a major controversy in the OD field is whether or not the OD specialist must be a part of the organization or external to it. There is even disagreement over whether a specialist is needed at all.<sup>14</sup> Most OD organizations do utilize an "OD Specialist" or "Third Party" to observe, analyze, and to "feedback" observations to aid groups and individuals in improving the communication processes. Other unresolved questions pertain to the role of management and whether the OD effort should be organization wide or undertaken only within those



organizational units that ask for OD intervention. Beckhard includes in his primary definition of OD the stipulation that the effort must be "organization-wide and managed from the top."<sup>15</sup> In the military environment, a comment that traditionally has been expressed is that "leadership begins at the top". This suggests the very critical role of the commander's position and his commitment to activities. Blake, the codeveloper of the Managerial Grid, one of the most widely used OD approaches, not only provides for top-management commitment but requires top management's active participation in the effort.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Grid OD is designed to be implemented without the use of any third parties; however, Grid OD specialists do provide face-to-face contributions at key points throughout the six-phase sequence.<sup>17</sup>

While the analysis of the organizational environment is a multidimensional and on-going undertaking, this diagnosis should provide the basis for determining the intervention (planned change) needed, and possible techniques that could be adopted to improve the effectiveness and overall functioning of the organization. There are many techniques used to facilitate the OD process, and to attempt to describe and evaluate each is beyond

the scope of this paper. Rather, a few of the common techniques having application to a wide range of organizational situations will be identified in order to highlight the focus or thrust of the OD process. The existing needs of the organization determine the specific strategies to be followed. For instance, the interventions planned and managed to deal with conflict resolution within one division may not bear a close relation to interventions needed to cope with other internal situations which can be identified as restraining efficiency in operations. On the other hand, team building efforts may be the focus at more than one level in order to facilitate group functioning and to improve coordination and the flow of information between organizational levels. Thus, interventions may be of a technical, administrative or social nature; frequently, techniques are used in conjunction with each other. While the preceding suggests the broaden scope of the OD effort, the key to understanding the OD approach nevertheless is in the involvement of people within the organization in carrying out activities. For this reason, the main focus of OD has always been on the process of communications and strategies used in social interventions. OD efforts start with the premise that free and open

communications is the key to organizational effectiveness. This management approach recognizes the role and influence of the group as a social unit and endeavors to create an organizational culture wherein people support and trust each other, and participate collaboratively in the functioning of the organization.

The Managerial Grid<sup>18</sup> technique involving the use of a Matrix having "concern for People" on the Y axis and "concern for Production" on the X axis provides a six phased process aimed to enable the manager to maximize concern for both production and people. Grid OD is an approach to improve the effectiveness of the entire organization by properly managing its culture and should be reviewed by anyone who wants to give serious consideration to the OD process. Another basic intervention model which encompasses most OD efforts and uses a consultant to assist working groups is "action research". The action research model consists of (1) a preliminary diagnosis, (2) data gathering from the client group, (3) data feedback to the client group, (4) data exploration by the client group, (5) problem diagnosis, (6) action planning, and (7) action.<sup>19</sup> Still another model is "Team Development" in which teams of co-workers engage in discussions to explore organizational

behavior and operational problems. A consultant or facilitator is normally utilized to clarify roles and to aid in improving communications and interaction. Participation and collaboration on various issues that emerge serve to clarify misperceptions, stimulate feelings of trust and mutual support, and modify behavior patterns that are more conducive to achieving organizational goals and objectives. Frequently, team building activities are launched subsequent to sending supervisors off to a management training workshop to gain self-awareness of their own leadership behavior and the principles of interpersonal relations.

The foregoing brief description of intervention techniques and change methodologies has been general. There is no condensed formula or standard operating procedure to follow, and different authors use different labels to describe similar developmental activities. Regardless of the techniques utilized, the initial intervention strategy concentrates on the informal social system: the values, attitudes, feelings, sentiments, group norms, and prevailing patterns of activities making up the culture and climate of the organization. This is the domain where the major impediments to organizational effectiveness prevail and

where opportunities reside for the OD manager. He must activate the members of his organization, enabling them to satisfy their needs by participating and contributing to solving the needs of the organization. If successful, a commitment emerges and true organizational effectiveness will be achieved. Therefore, the need for an evaluative study of the OD process and the alternative approaches is emphasized in order for the manager to first gain a clear understanding of what OD is (and what it is not), and secondly, to acquire a skill level in his leadership role for use of the OD strategy.

#### APPLICATION OF OD WITHIN DOD

OD applications have become increasingly evident in many of the civilian institutions of our industrial society. Since the primary overall objective of OD is to improve organizational effectiveness, it would appear that OD should be applicable to military organizations as well. Critics quickly point out however, that the autocratic leadership model best supports the military environment and missions; that participative management will rapidly erode those leadership prerogatives which are essential for effective command and control. Certainly,

the successful military leader might be highly skeptical and in the end, opt to pass on OD. Yet many other successful professionals will ponder the issue deliberately and at least theoretically ask, "Is there a better way?" Perhaps the enlightened leader who develops an appreciation and understanding of OD following a challenging command assignment might yearn "to do it all over again utilizing OD." Several OD applications have been undertaken in each of the military services. Unfortunately, no reliable means presently exists to evaluate how extensive the applications have been and more importantly, to evaluate the results achieved. Currently, an Army-wide effort is underway to train Organizational Effectiveness Staff Officers and to monitor the reactions and perceptions toward the use of the OESO in establishing OE programs at the battalion level. Sufficient general officer interest appears to prevail to at least get the OE program launched on a sizeable scale.

The transition to an all volunteer Army may have highlighted the need to modify leadership behavior styles. The new soldier of the modern Army has more and better education than before, brings higher expectations and new attitudes that cut across racial lines. These social trends produce youth who are seeking personal freedom,

more meaningful and challenging work, and who are less likely to follow orders blindly. In essence, the attitude of both those being lead and of society at large have been altered significantly; OD (OE) may offer a management strategy that preserves command and control while treating and utilizing the soldier in a manner which provides him with a meaningful job, responsibility, recognition, and personal involvement in achieving the organization's objectives.

#### An OD Application in the Field

An early application of OD in DOD involves a logistical support unit in Germany in 1973. The 2nd Movements Region was one of three almost identical battalion equivalent organizations with traffic management responsibility for geographical areas in Central Europe. The 2nd Region zone included all of the area in Germany West of the Rhine River, with the primary mission for arranging line-haul transportation for over 100 customer units. All of the Army Depots, where shipments originated for the movement of all classes of supplies, including ammunition, to US Forces located throughout Germany were major customers. The new commander made an initial assessment of the unit's strengths, weaknesses, existing technical and managerial skill levels, and the

diverse mission responsibilities. Based upon an analysis and evaluation derived from personal interviews, discussion, and group meetings during and subsequent to the orientation period following assumption of command, the need for and receptibility of an OD management strategy were apparent.

The OD program began as a team development effort in the Region Headquarters and one of its subordinated operating units. It was launched without the aid of outside consultants as none were available. Initially, team development sessions were held daily with staff officers and selected non-commissioned officers during the early training phase. The short range goal was to establish a management team that could effectively coordinate daily transportation support requirements and efficiently allocate the available transportation resources in a manner that would be responsive to the needs of each customer. The long-term change goals were to (1) improve communication by removing barriers which caused information concerning poor or non-responsive performance to be suppressed, (2) enhance the career development and technical qualification of enlisted transportation management supervisors and movement specialists, (3) establish uniform decision making criteria and reporting procedures consistent with maximum personal involvement



and decentralization, and (4) increase the responsiveness to customers needs by personal commitment to providing a needed service. The main thrust of the OD effort evolved into supportive training measures to increase the professional qualification of individual skill levels and team performance. The approach achieved strong personal commitment to job performance and created an organic change in the organizational climate in which growth, development, and renewal were brought about as a natural part of daily operations. The commander made maximum use of personnel resources by delegating decision making to the level which could best assess the situation and influence the pattern of activity needed to be responsive to the requirement. In turn, the commander freed himself to visit major commanders being supported and was able to exert an influence over external factors having an impact on the organization's mission. The overall effect within the unit was a contagious developing of norms, sentiments, and values which guided individuals and team members. High job satisfaction was attained as members felt that (1) they had an important job to do, (2) they were doing their jobs well and had someone to turn to if they needed help, and (3) they were being rewarded by appropriate recognition and from the personal

satisfaction and esteem that comes from being viewed as a professional. While the above description and assessments are subjective, monthly command performance reports and two annual inspector general inspections confirm the degree of organizational effectiveness achieved during the subsequent two year period.

#### An OD Application at a Major Headquarters

The US Army Military Personnel Center (MILPERCEN) was the organization selected for the first major test of the OD concept in an Army unit. The Army's commitment to this pilot project surfaced in June 1972, and consultants from the Systems Development Corporation formally commenced the diagnostic phase in May 1973. The initial program consisted of three phases: a diagnostic phase, a developmental phase, and an evaluation phase. Consultants used individual interviews, sensing sessions, and an attitude survey as an extensive and integrated approach in the diagnostic phase. A number of intervention techniques were utilized during the developmental phase to include (1) intern training program to develop internal resources to sustain the OD project, (2) action planning workshops to improve the communication processes and problem solving (3) communication planning model to build

greater organizational cohesiveness, and (4) team building. The evaluation phase consisted of interview data and written assessments of the developmental efforts.<sup>20</sup> While a wide variance existed in the degree of acceptance of OD within each directorate, success was achieved in all endeavors.

The follow-on program retains the main thrust of the original developmental effort. Fortunately, General Mancinelli, one of the senior Army officers who participated in the pilot test and a strong OD advocate, is the current Director of MILPERCEN's largest directorate. During a recent interview<sup>21</sup> he made the following comments concerning the long-term efforts required to implement OE and the adaptive leadership style that may be required to achieve organizational effectiveness:

In my judgment, the current OE effort (called OD by the non-Army world) is the infancy of a new era which will, in the next decade, replace the current "scientific management" philosophy now prevalent in all forms of organizations. As I would explain it, OE is the introduction of a number of new (at least new to the Army's form of leadership) concepts, techniques and strategies which have grown out of behavioral sciences study, research and application aimed at increasing organizational effectiveness. Here at MILPERCEN, we have

had a concerted effort to implement OE for more than three years and at times I feel we have just scratched the surface. The leader of any organization who decides to get involved in the OE program must accept some new tenets about himself and his organization which are not widely accepted in today's Army. One of these new ground rules is that real organizational effectiveness or in combat arms terms "readiness" can be achieved only if the leader can obtain involvement of the whole organization in that goal. It means leaders will have to practice "followership." In still other words, it means that the organizational members help determine how and then improve organizational effectiveness rather than being told how by the leader. What really happens is that the leader delegates decision making to the level where it belongs, freeing himself to play the leadership roles commensurate with his position. And how pleased the leader will be when he sees the increased effectiveness of his subordinates resulting in his additional trust and confidence in them. It is no easy task to alter leadership style and personal behavior to bring into play practices which will stimulate, motivate, and activate organizational members. Yet if the leadership in an organization cannot activate the majority of its members to strive for real organizational effectiveness, then the organization will never be truly effective.

#### SUMMARY

The OD concept and process evolved from a humanistic interest and concern for "people in organizations." It

is a long term developmental effort whose central aim is to intervene in a manner that activates and motivates members to improve organizational effectiveness. While OD has been successful in numerous applications (including DOD organizations), it is no panacea or "off the shelf" system for improving operational efficiency. The needs of the organization and the personal management philosophy of its top leaders should be evaluated before attempting to implement an OD program. Every professional manager should be familiar with organizational development in order to consider it as a possible management strategy to improve organizational effectiveness.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John M. Brooks".

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Harold M.F. Rush, "Organizational Development: A Reconnaissance." The Conference Board Incorporated, 1973, p. 3.
2. US Department of the Army, DA Letter 600-76-2, p. 1.
3. Peter Drucker, "What We Can Learn from Japanese Management," Harvard Business Review, March-April 1971, p. 110.
4. Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise, p. 18.
5. Ibid, pp. 33-34.
6. F.J. Roethlisberger, Man-in-Organization, p. 33.
7. McGregor, pp. 47-48.
8. Harold Lazarus, et al, The Progress of Management, p. 119.
9. Geert H. Hotstede, "The Color of Collars," Columbia Journal of World Business, September-October 1972, pp. 72-80.
10. McGregor, p. 38.
11. Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Organization Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement, p. 15.
12. Ibid, p. 16.
13. Roethlisberger, p. 186.
14. Rush, p. 11.
15. Richard Beckhard, Organizational Development: Strategies and Models, p. 9.
16. Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, Corporate Excellence Through Grid Organization Development, p. 68.

17. Ibid, p. 293.

18. Robert R. Blake and Jane S. Mouton, "Organization Excellence Through Effective Management Behavior," Manage, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 42-47.

19. French and Bell, p. 18.

20. US Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Organization Development Pilot Test for Army Personnel Center, pp. 2-5.

21. Interview with T.B. Mancinelli, BG, US Army Military Personnel Center, Washington, 15 July 1976.

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